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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HAVANA 000372

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SECSTATE FOR WHA A/S SHANNON, DAS MADISON, AMBASSADOR
MCCARRY
SECSTATE PLEASE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR FISK,
SENIOR DIRECTOR KOZAK

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SUBJECT: CUBAN OPPOSITION AGREES ON UNITY STATEMENT

REF: HAVANA 362

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Classified By: MICHAEL E. PARMLY FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: THE TOP CUBAN DISSIDENT LEADERS HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON A UNITY TEXT, WHICH THEY REPORT WILL BE RELEASED THE EVENING OF APRIL 15. THE TEXT IS THE HANDIWORK OF OSWALDO PAYA, BUT HAS THE SIGNATURES OF MARTHA BEATRIZ ROQUE, LAURA POLLAN, VLADIMIRO ROCA, ELIZARDO SANCHEZ, OSCAR ESPINOSA CHEPE AND MIRIAM LEYVA. IT WILL REMAIN "OPEN" FOR SIGNATURE BY OTHERS. ALL OF THE SIGNATORIES TOLD US ON THE EVENING OF 13 APRIL THAT THE VISIT OF SPANISH FM MORATINOS HAD GALVANIZED THEM INTO ACTION. THE TEXT ACKNOWLEDGES THE DIVERSITY OF CUBAN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS BUT FOCUSES ON COMMON OBJECTIVES, INCLUDING THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THE PROMOTION OF RESPECT FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ALL CUBANS. THE REGIME COULD REACT FURIOUSLY TO THE TEXT AND TRY TO SMEAR ALL THE SIGNATORIES PUBLICLY. THE UNITY TEXT, WHILE A SMALL STEP, MARKS A BREAKTHROUGH FOR CUBA'S PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) THE VISIT OF SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER MORATINOS TO CUBA EARLY THIS MONTH HAS FINALLY PRODUCED A RESULT, BUT NOT THE ONE THE SPANIARDS SOUGHT. VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE TOP DISSIDENT LEADERSHIP REACHED AGREEMENT ON A UNITY TEXT ON 13 APRIL. OSWALDO PAYA, HEAD OF THE CHRISTIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND FOUNDER OF THE VARELA PROJECT, WAS ITS MAIN DRAFTER. OTHER SIGNATORIES ARE MARTHA BEATRIZ ROQUE OF THE ASSEMBLY TO PROMOTE CIVIL SOCIETY, VLADIMIRO ROCA OF ALL UNITED, "LADIES IN WHITE" LAURA POLLAN AND MIRIAM LEYVA, ECONOMIST OSCAR ESPINOSA CHEPE, AND ELIZARDO SANCHEZ OF THE CUBAN COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND NACIONAL RECONCILIATION. THE STATEMENT WILL BE RELEASED THE EVENING OF 15 APRIL. IT WILL BE LEFT "OPEN" FOR OTHERS TO JOIN.

13. (C) THE ACTUAL TEXT OF THE STATEMENT IS THE WORK OF OSWALDO PAYA. PAYA, STILL SEETHING OVER MORATINOS' SNUB OF CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY, HAD TOLD US ON APRIL 9 THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO STOP AT JUST BEING ANGRY. HE SPENT THE WEEK WORKING ON A DRAFT. PAYA THEN TOOK HIS TEXT TO A MEETING WITH EU COMMISSION REP SVEN VON BURGSDORFF, WHERE THE OTHER DISSIDENT REPS WERE IN ATTENDANCE, AND SHARED IT WITH THEM. THE OTHER DISSIDENT REPS ALL TOLD US LATE APRIL 13 THAT THEY WERE DELIGHTED WITH THE TEXT. THERE WERE TWO FIGURES AT THE

MEETING WHO BALKED -- PREDICTABLY, MANUEL CUESTA MORUA OF PROGRESSIVE ARC AND ELOY GUTIERREZ MENOYO, THE ONLY TWO DISSIDENTS WHO ACCEPTED A SPANISH INVITATION TO MEET AFTER MORATINOS' APRIL 3 DEPARTURE. IN CONVERSATION APRIL 13, THOSE WHO DID AGREE TO SIGN DISMISSED THE HOLD-OUTS AS INSIGNIFICANT.

¶4. (C) THE TEXT OF THE APPEAL FOCUSES ON THE THEME OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF THE PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT. IN LANGUAGE THAT IS VINTAGE PAYA, IT UNDERLINES UNITY ON FOUR PRINCIPLES:

-- COMMON OBJECTIVES (RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL CUBANS, DEMOCRACY, RECONCILIATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, LIBERTY AND SOVEREIGNTY);

-- THE IMMEDIATE LIBERATION OF ALL THOSE IMPRISONED FOR FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS;

-- PROMOTION OF PEACEFUL MEANS TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES; AND

-- RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY OF INITIATIVES AND PATHS, IN A SPIRIT OF PLURALISM, TO REACH THOSE ENDS.

THE TEXT ENDS WITH A FORCEFUL PROCLAMATION ON FOUR POINTS:

--1. THAT IT IS CUBANS ALONE WHO CAN ACHIEVE CHANGES IN CUBAN SOCIETY.

--2. THAT THE SOLIDARITY "OF THE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD" TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC CHANGES WILL BE THE TRUE SIGN OF RESPECT FOR CUBANS.

--3. THAT THE SIGNERS DO NOT ACCEPT THAT THE RESPECT OF THE RIGHTS OF CUBANS SHOULD BE CONDITIONED TO THE INTERNATIONAL

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SITUATION OR TO CUBA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. (COMMENT: IN OTHER WORDS, CUBA'S EXCUSE THAT THE U.S. EMBARGO JUSTIFIES ITS ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS HERE IS BUNK.)

--4. THAT THE "RADICAL DEMAND" OF THE SIGNERS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS BE RESPECTED IS ROOTED IN THE PRINCIPLE THAT "ALL CUBANS HAVE A RIGHT TO ALL THE RIGHTS THAT BELONG TO ALL HUMAN BEINGS."

¶5. (C) ALL OF THE SIGNERS BRIEFED US, BOTH SEPARATELY AND JOINTLY, AT A FAREWELL RECEPTION FOR DEPARTING USINT HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER GREG WIEGAND LATE APRIL 13. IN THE BRIEFINGS, INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES INEVITABLY EMERGED; SEVERAL CLAIMED TO HAVE ORIGINATED THE IDEA OF A TEXT. HOWEVER, CLEARLY IT WAS THE FACT THAT THE PROPOSAL CAME FROM PAYA -- WHO HAS LONG BEEN RELUCTANT TO SIGN ON TO ANY JOINT APPEAL -- THAT TIPPED THE BALANCE. PAYA HIMSELF TOLD US TWO FACTORS HAD PUSHED THE EVOLUTION IN HIS THINKING: ONE WAS MORATINOS' VISIT. THE OTHER, PAYA CLAIMED, WAS THE FACT THAT THERE HAS STARTED TO CIRCULATE A TEXT CALLING FOR CUBA'S ANNEXATION BY THE UNITED STATES. PAYA DISMISSED THE REPORTED TEXT AS A CLUMSY REGIME ATTEMPT TO TARNISH THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, HE SAID, IT WAS TIME FOR A UNITY STATEMENT.

¶6. (C) SEVERAL OF THE SIGNERS, INCLUDING PAYA, TOLD US THEY WANTED TO CONSULT WITH US IN THE DAYS AHEAD ON NEXT MOVES. FOR NOW, EVEN TEN DAYS AFTER MORATINOS' DEPARTURE, THE VISIT OF THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUES TO RILE THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT. OSCAR ESPINOSA CHEPE RELEASED ON APRIL 13 TWO INCENDIARY COMMENTARIES, ONE ON THE MORATINOS VISIT, THE OTHER ON THE SPANISH BUSINESS PRESENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE HOTEL SECTOR, WHICH CHEPE LABELS BLUNTLY AS "APARTHEID." OTHER DISSIDENTS ARE ALSO EXPANDING THEIR FIELD OF ACTION. INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST AND FREED 75ER JORGE OLIVEIRA REPORTS THAT A CUBAN CHAPTER OF THE "PEN" ORGANIZATION WILL BE FORMED THE WEEK OF APRIL 16. LEADING "LADY IN WHITE" LAURA POLLAN SAYS HER ORGANIZATION IS PLANNING NEW ACTIVITIES. ALL POINT TO THE MORATINOS VISIT AS A CATALYST.

17. (C) COMMENT: THE UNITY TEXT IS A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT STEP. CUBA'S LEADING PRO-DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HAVE FINALLY RECOGNIZED THAT MORE UNITES THAN DIVIDES THEM. CLEARLY, RIVALRIES CONTINUE IN THE DISSIDENT COMMUNITY. THE TEXT'S VALUE IS THAT IT ACCEPTS THESE DIFFERENCES OPENLY. IT'S UNCLEAR HOW THE REGIME WILL REACT TO THE STATEMENT; IT COULD SIMPLY TRY TO IGNORE IT, THOUGH THE AUTHORITIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO REACT FURIOUSLY AND SMEAR THE SIGNATORIES THROUGH THE PRESS. AS ALWAYS, THE U.S. WILL BE DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD REPEATEDLY. STILL, THE TEXT IS A SIGN OF COURAGE, AND A HEFTY BOOST TO WHAT WE HAVE REPORTED AS A GROWING WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK OUT (REFTEL). THE ASPECT THAT PLEASES US MOST IS THAT THE TEXT IS ENTIRELY A CUBAN INITIATIVE. FOREIGN OBSERVERS, ESPECIALLY EUROPEANS, ARE VOCAL IN THEIR CRITICISMS OF THE FACT THAT THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IS DIVIDED. THEY OFTEN CITE THAT AS THE EXPLANATION FOR THEIR FAILURE TO DO MORE TO HELP. THE UNITY TEXT TAKES THAT EXCUSE AWAY. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING QUIETLY BEHIND THE SCENES FOR MONTHS TO REACH THIS GOAL, AND HAVE FELT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE IN RECENT WEEKS, AS DISSIDENT LEADERS CAME TO REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TOGETHER. IN THE END, HOWEVER, WHEN THE TEXT COMES OUT SUNDAY EVENING, IT WILL BE THE CUBANS THEMSELVES WHO WILL HAVE PULLED IT OFF. THE TEXT REINFORCES OUR CONVICTION THE THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY -- OF INSISTING THAT CHANGE BE LED BY CUBANS THEMSELVES -- HAS BEEN THE RIGHT ONE.

PARMLY